



**July 26, 2021**

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## **Employee Spotlight**

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### ***Andrew Vinson (water quality specialist) – Thank You!***

- ◆ The below message was sent from Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation Associate Professor Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver.
  - “Thank you very much for providing Natalie Hedrick, one of our forestry majors at Virginia Tech, an excellent job shadowing experience. You provided great opportunities for her to learn about the Virginia Department of Forestry and experience two real days in the world of forestry. I really appreciate your generosity and support in mentoring the next generation of foresters.

Kind regards,  
Carolyn”

## Employee News

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### *Calling VDOF Woodworkers!*

- ◆ This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reforestation of Timberlands Program (RT). We have harvested and milled a 50-year-old loblolly pine tree from one of the first RT projects. We would like to produce some commemorative items from that wood. We're seeking both ideas and woodworkers to help with this voluntary project. In particular, we hope to have some items for the silent auction at the annual Forestry Summit in late September, with proceeds benefitting the Project Learning Tree program. If you would like to demonstrate, hone, or develop your wood skills, please contact Dean Cumbia ([dean.cumbia@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:dean.cumbia@dof.virginia.gov)).

## News You Can Use

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### *Alert! Beech Leaf Disease*

- ◆ Beech Leaf Disease has been confirmed in Prince William County. This new disease was first detected in Ohio in 2012 and has since been found in Pennsylvania, New York, Canada, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Connecticut. The disease is associated with a foliar nematode, *Litylenchus crenatae*, which was originally described in Japan. Symptoms include interveinal darkening (bands of thick, dark green tissue between leaf veins), distorted curled leaves, thin crowns, and branch dieback. Symptoms are most easily observed by looking up into the forest canopy. Efforts are currently focused on monitoring disease severity and progression, so please contact VDOF Forest Health program staff if you find symptomatic beech trees. More information can be found here: <https://usfs-public.app.box.com/v/EasternRegionPublications/file/787426913431>

## Last Week

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### *State Forester*

- ◆ Rob Farrell attended the Albemarle County Virginia Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting to provide an update on the VDOF timber harvest water quality program.

### *Forestland Conservation*

- ◆ In partnership with the Science Museum of Virginia, Capital One, the Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges (VFIC), the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) participated in data collection for the 2021 Heat Island Study. The study involved driving a predetermined route through the city while measuring air quality and ambient temperatures at three different times of the day. This study was conducted simultaneously in 11 different cities across the Commonwealth. This was the largest study of its kind in the country. The data will be compiled into a Virginia Heat Island Map and shared with each participating municipality to help influence policy decisions, urban planning, and tree planting efforts. It will also be used to teach students about urban heat islands and for graduate student work in all of the participating colleges and universities. Funding for the study was granted through Capital One and VDOF. Several VDOF staff were able to participate in the data collection process. (pictured) [https://richmond.com/news/local/richmond-to-participate-in-nations-largest-heat-mapping-effort/article\\_faccc16e-9dca-5ae9-93e1-eafe71009f55.html?fbclid=IwAR1-](https://richmond.com/news/local/richmond-to-participate-in-nations-largest-heat-mapping-effort/article_faccc16e-9dca-5ae9-93e1-eafe71009f55.html?fbclid=IwAR1-)



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- ◆ Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring and Assistant State Forester Terry Lasher met with partners from Maryland's Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape to discuss the benefits of a regional approach to conservation management through engagement with the Department of Defense and federal natural resource agencies, and to gain further support for the Virginia Security Corridors application.
- ◆ Eli Podyma (community forester), Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry partnership coordinator) and Aaron McFarland with the Enrichmond Foundation gave a tour of Evergreen Cemetery to a group of Master Naturalists. The history of the cemetery as well as the forest management efforts were discussed. VDOF previously wrote management plans for both cemeteries focusing on invasive species control and hazard tree mitigation.
- ◆ Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) authored the urban wood column for the quarterly Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (MAC-ISA) newsletter, which will be published sometime next week. MAC-ISA has truly embraced urban wood as part of the full-circle management of the urban forest. The urban wood column is now a regular feature in the newsletter.
- ◆ Deya Ramsden (James River Buffer program coordinator) hosted a virtual feedback session with foresters within the Middle James Watershed around the use of natural regeneration as an establishment method in riparian areas. Deya introduced a draft natural regeneration assessment tool that takes into consideration native seed source and invasive weed pressure. Participants tried out the tool and discussed ways to educate and approach landowners about this method of buffer establishment. The nine participants offered good feedback, which will be used to flesh out this aspect of the James River Buffer Program.

### **Forest Resource Management**

- ◆ Spotted lanternfly has been detected in both Lynchburg and Charlottesville. Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is surveying and treating both sites, and VDOF is supporting their efforts.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) conducted an aerial survey in southwest Virginia for gypsy moth damage. Light defoliation was seen on some ridgetops, but there was no widespread severe damage.
- ◆ Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager) delivered a virtual forest management presentation to the Virginia Association of Assessing Officers (VAAO) on July 14. The VAAO is a professional organization of assessors and appraisers from state and local governments throughout the Commonwealth who set the land use taxation rates for their counties. The presentation was developed to help educate the assessing officers on the types of trees that make up Virginia's forests and how they are managed to provide multiple benefits for Virginia residents. The VAAO meets annually to receive continuing education that will help them to better assess their county's farm, forest and open land resources. The Forest Resources Management Branch staff have presented at these conferences for over 10 years.

### **State Forests**

- ◆ Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) met with representatives of North Carolina Forest Service, including County Rangers Brandon Keener, and Russell Choate as well as Forest Health Specialist Brian Heath, to look at and discuss current health issues affecting eastern white pine throughout the region. They observed several issues, including annosus and procerum root diseases

and caliciopsis fungus on the Matthews State Forest and surrounding private lands. Discussion also included management of the white pine resource to minimize the long term effects of these issues.

- ◆ Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist) met with Sandy Hausman of WVTF/Radio IQ at The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve for a story on prescribed burning using drones and dragon eggs. <https://www.wvtf.org/post/drones-and-dragon-eggs-protect-va-forests#stream/0>
- ◆ Staff assisted Brian Bates with Toga Volunteer Fire Department to locate and GPS four draft sites on Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest for use by the Fire Department: Slate River Reservoir boat ramp and three places where a forest road crosses or is adjacent to a creek large enough to draft water.
- ◆ Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources staff are trapping bears on Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest to attach tracking collars for their bear monitoring program.
- ◆ Ed Stoots, Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager), Andrew Fotinos (forest conservation specialist) and Kirby Woolfolk (forest management specialist) met with two trustees of the John H. Daniel Trust in Charlotte County to explore possible acquisition of contiguous acreage already owned by the state or in the process of becoming so. Both ancestors of the property - father and grandfather - were passionate conservationists, and the trustees felt it would be fitting to preserve a portion of the family estate for the enjoyment of future generations of Charlotte County citizens. The trust desires to sell approximately 326 acres of property that joins the proposed Stanley Phase 3 acquisition for the Charlotte State Forest.
- ◆ A National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant application was submitted by the Ruffed Grouse Society for just under \$200,000, to implement projects in southwest Virginia that will aid in both forest and habitat management of hardwood forests. The Virginia Department of Forestry's Channels State Forest, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), and Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) are partners to the grant application, with the potential to add state-owned lands within the Clinch Mountain Area. The grant period, if awarded, would be December 2021 to December 2024.

### State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Invasive species spraying was completed on the Virginia Tech McCormick Farm and Department of Corrections Goochland Women's Center projects last week, as part of the upcoming harvest of hardwood stands to promote better hardwood regeneration after harvesting.

### Central Region

- ◆ Tom Snoddy (Heartland work area forester) gave a presentation to 28 students of the Virginia Academy of Natural Resources (VANR). This online program took the place of the Woods and Wildlife Camp (formerly Holiday Lake Forestry Camp). Students heard a presentation on 'Trees to Products', which dealt with the wide variety of timber products that are harvested in Virginia, along with an overview of timber harvesting and the VDOF's role in harvest inspections. The students asked excellent questions throughout the presentation.
- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) participated in a meeting with NASA and Fairfax County Climate and Energy Office staff on a heat island mapping project for Fairfax County. Jim and county staff explained why the preliminary heat anomaly map looked like it did, and Jim pointed out that if tree planting is being considered to reduce heat islands, it is more important to look at where the plantable space is than to look at canopy coverage.
- ◆ Annie Ligush (bay watershed specialist), Ed Furlow, (area forester), and Joe Rossetti (senior area forester) performed invasive species control and site preparation for a James River Buffer Program planting in Greene County. Riparian buffer installation is a priority focus for VDOF to support the



state's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III) goals. Now that there are fewer invasives, this 200-acre site with several hundred feet of stream bank will be better suited to establish forest.

## Eastern Region

- ◆ Recently timber harvesting along the seaside on the Eastern Shore raised some eyebrows in the Accomac County Environmental Planning Office. The harvest was a clear cut done next to tidal marsh and a drainage called Frogstool Branch. The harvest area fell entirely in the county Resource Protection Area (RPA); even though it was on the seaside and not in the Chesapeake watershed, it still falls under Chesapeake Bay Act rules. Pictures were taken, letters were sent to the landowner, and the county attorney was being brought in to handle the matter. The landowner contacted the VDOF Shore office asking for advice on what to do. As it turned out, VDOF Shore personnel were very familiar with the tract and landowner, and had already inspected the harvest area and closed out the harvest inspection report. The county claimed that a very inadequate buffer had been left, and that since the harvest was in the RPA, penalties would certainly be placed on the landowner. To help diffuse the situation, Shore VDOF personnel ground-truthed and documented the width of the 50' SMZ buffer, and wrote a letter to the environmental office explaining silvicultural law, the code involved, best management practices used, and how the harvest in question was done lawfully. Many thanks go to Matt Poirot (water quality engineer) for helping out by editing the letter, citing the code involved, and polishing the letter so that it would have the most effect in explaining the VDOF's role in enforcing laws regarding timber harvesting and water quality. The letter was sent to the county environmental office. A short time later the environmental director contacted the VDOF Shore office to thank them for handling the situation quickly, thoroughly explaining how VDOF handles harvest inspections, and that there were no issues to correct on the harvest in question. Apparently he was unaware of how timber harvesting is addressed under the Chesapeake Bay Act, and how silvicultural law affects forest management in places like RPAs. One of the many duties of the VDOF is education of the public regarding Virginia's timber resource. This particular incident is definitely a feather in VDOF's cap.



## Western Region

- ◆ Brian Ledford (area forester) and William Neff (forest technician) participated in Virginia Cooperative Extension's Environmental Science Day Camp in Pennington Gap (Lee County). Brian and William taught 15 children how to identify common trees in the area by using the dichotomous key found in VDOF's Common Native Trees of Virginia book. The camp participants also learned about the food web, pollinators, soil erosion and aquatic systems. (pictured)



## Public Information

- ◆ Janet Muncy (integrated marketing manager) accompanied Lara Johnson to Richmond and Petersburg to document the urban heat island data collection. Janet interviewed participants and researchers. The video and audio documentation will be used to help tell the story of this important project.

- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) and Bonnie Mahl (Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservations Districts [VASWCD] education coordinator) combined their camp planning experience to host the Virginia Academy of Natural Resources. Thanks to the state of the pandemic during early 2021, this collaborative event offered a virtual alternative to both VDOF's Camp Woods and Wildlife and VASWCD's Youth Conservation Camp. Twenty-eight teens from around the state attended the week of virtual presentations in soils, aquatics, forestry, and wildlife; participated in small group project work to showcase their area's natural resource issues; and completed field study activities in their own neighborhoods. Evaluations were extremely positive. Other VDOF staff who helped with the academy were Jordan Herring and Greg Estoll (senior area foresters); Kathleen Ogilvy, Justin Funk, and Tom Snoddy (area foresters); and Jon Perry (forest technician).

## News Clips

- ◆ [Drones and "Dragon Eggs" Protect VA Forests](#)
- ◆ [Our Favorite Southern Mountain Ranges for a Getaway Any Time of Year](#)
- ◆ [We can't fireproof fire-dependent forests, but we can protect homes](#)
- ◆ [The return of the American chestnut tree in Fluvanna](#)
- ◆ [The commerce of conservation](#)
- ◆ [Scientists Search for Heat Islands in Virginia, Collect Data to Combat Climate Change](#)
- ◆ [How Do We End the Myths About Paper Use and Forests? Everybody has a Part to Play!](#)
- ◆ [Understanding Forest Inventory & the Importance of Working Forests](#)
- ◆ [How Wood Products Could Lower the Cost of Forest Management](#)
- ◆ [In Favor of Wood-Fiber Insulation](#)
- ◆ [Wood. Can we still call it that?](#)
- ◆ ["Metallic" wood is as strong as titanium, reflects light](#)
- ◆ [SU volunteers sizzle in heatwave study](#)